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# College Dictionary

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Based on

**The Random House**

**Dictionary of the**

**English Language**

**The Unabridged Edition**

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## Preface

IN THE DECADES recently past, especially since World War II, the educational standards of the world have been extended to embrace more people than ever before. Literacy has increased enormously. Coupled with the technological advances of the period, the necessity for reading and study has resulted in an unprecedented interest in words.

The dictionary has traditionally been the only source of information on language for the majority of people. In it they expect to find how a word is spelled, how it may be hyphenated, how it is pronounced, what its various forms are, what its meanings are, and what its origins and history are. They also expect to find whether a word is technical or general, whether it can be used in polite company or not, and even whether someone who is called a certain word is justified in feeling offended. They want unfamiliar objects illustrated and particular places pinpointed on maps; they want biographical information, geographical, demographic, and political data, abbreviations, symbols, synonyms, antonyms, usage notes—in short, people expect to find condensed between the covers of a dictionary the knowledge of the world as reflected in their language. Above all, they demand that this knowledge be accurate and up to date. Indeed, why not? The dictionary is often the only reference book of any kind that many people ever own.

That these prodigious demands are met is, of course, no accident. A dictionary is the product of specialists, linguists, and highly trained editors who are devoted to researching language and information and to interpreting it and presenting it in understandable form.

The *Random House College Dictionary* is an abridgment of *The Random House Dictionary of the English Language—The Unabridged Edition*, and its style follows that of the *RHD*. No dictionary, no matter how extensive, could record the entire English language. It is obvious, then, that the editors of any dictionary are compelled to exercise discretion in what is to be included. The goal cannot be completeness: the goal must be judicious selectivity. There is no death of re-

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## Table of Contents

Preface . . . . .	v
Editorial Staff . . . . .	vii
Consultant Staff . . . . .	viii
Indo-European Language Chart . . . . .	x
Historical Sketch of the English Language . . . . .	xi
Etymology Key . . . . .	xv
Pronunciation Key . . . . .	xvi
Pronunciation of English . . . . .	xvii
Usage, Dialects, and Functional Varieties . . . . .	xix
Guide to the Dictionary . . . . .	xxii
Table of Common English Spellings . . . . .	xxxii
A DICTIONARY OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE . . . . .	1
Signs and Symbols . . . . .	1535
Directory of United States Colleges and Universities . . . . .	1539

# THE RAND HOUSE Colleges Dictionary

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1. pertaining to Ceylon, its native people, or their language. —n. 2. a member of the Sinhalese people. 3. an Indic language that is the language of most of Ceylon, including Colombo. Also, Sinhalese. [var. of *Sinhalese* < Skt *Sinhala* (a) Ceylon + -ese]  
**sin-gle** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl), *adj.*, *v.*, *gled*, *-gling*, *n.* —*adj.* 1. one only; only one in number; sole: a single example. 2. of, pertaining to, or suitable for one person only: a single bed. 3. unique; solitary: He was the single survivor. 4. unmarried. 5. pertaining to the unmarried state. 6. of one against one, as combat or fight. 7. consisting of only one part, element, or member: a single lens. 8. sincere; honest; undivided: single devotion. 9. separate; individual. 10. uniform; applicable to all. 11. (of a flower) having only one set of petals. 12. *Brit.* of only moderate strength or body, as ale or beer. 13. (of the eye) seeing rightly. —*v.* 14. to pick or choose out from others (usually fol. by *out*): to single out a fact for special mention. 15. *Baseball*, *n.* to cause the advance of (a base runner) by a one-base hit. 16. to cause (a run) to be scored by a one-base hit (often fol. by *in*). —*v.* 17. *Baseball*, to make a one-base hit. 18. *Obs.* (of a horse) to go at single-foot. —*n.* 19. one person or thing; a single one. 20. an accommodation for one person, as a hotel room, cabin on a ship, etc. 21. Also called *one-base hit*. *Baseball*, a base hit that enables a batter to reach first base safely. 22. *singles*, (construed as *sing.*) a match with one player on each side. 23. *Golf*, twosome (def. 4). 24. *Cricket*, a hit for which one run is scored. 25. *Informal*, a one-dollar bill: a five and five singles. [late ME; ME *sengle* < MP < L *single* (us); see *SINGLE*] —*Syn.* 1. distinct, particular. 4. unwe. 14. select. 18. individual.  
**sin-gle-act-ing** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl ək'tɪŋ), *adj.* (of a reciprocating engine, pump, etc.) having pistons accomplishing work only in one direction. Cf. *double-acting* (def. 1).  
**sin-gle-ac-tion** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl ək'tʃən), *adj.* (of a firearm) requiring the cocking of the hammer before firing each shot: a single-action revolver.  
**sin-gle bond**, *Chem.* a chemical linkage consisting of one covalent bond between two atoms of a molecule, represented in chemical formulas by one line or two vertical dots, as C-H or C-H.  
**sin-gle-breast-ed** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl bres'tɪd), *adj.* (of a garment, esp. a coat or jacket) having a single button or row of buttons down the center closing. Cf. *double-breasted*.  
**sin-gle-cross** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl krɒs/), *n.* *Genetics*, a cross between two inbred lines.  
**sin-gle cut**, *Jewelry*, a simple form of brilliant cut, having eight facets above and eight facets below the girdle. Also called *half-brilliant cut*.  
**sin-gle-cut** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl kʊt/), *adj.* noting a file having a series of parallel cutting ridges in one direction only.  
**sin-gle en-try**, *Bookkeeping*, a simple accounting system noting only amounts owed by and due to a business. Cf. *double entry*. —*sin-gle-en-try*, *adj.*  
**sin-gle file**, a line of persons or things arranged one behind the other; Indian file.  
**sin-gle-foot** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl fʊt/), *n.* 1. rack. —*v.* 2. (of a horse) to go at a rack.  
**sin-gle-hand-ed** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl han'dɪd), *adj.* 1. accomplished or done by one person alone; unaided. 2. having, using, or requiring the use of only one hand or one person: *adv.* 3. by oneself; alone; without aid. —*sin-gle-hand-ed-ly*, *adv.* —*sin-gle-hand-ed-ness*, *n.*  
**sin-gle-heart-ed** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl hɑ:tɪd), *adj.* sincere and undivided in feeling or spirit; dedicated.  
**sin-gle-mind-ed** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl maɪndɪd), *adj.* 1. having or showing a single aim or purpose: a single-minded program. 2. dedicated; steadfast. —*sin-gle-mind-ed-ly*, *adv.* —*sin-gle-mind-ed-ness*, *n.*  
**sin-gle-ness** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl nis), *n.* the state or quality of being single.  
**sin-gle-phase** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl fāz/), *adj.* *Elec.* noting or pertaining to a circuit having an alternating current with one phase or with phases differing by 180°.  
**sin-gle quotes**, one pair of single quotation marks, written as ( ) and used esp. for a quotation within another quotation: He said, "I told you to say 'Open sesame' when you want to enter the mountain." Cf. *double quotes*.  
**sin-gle-shot** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl ʃɒt/), *adj.* (of a firearm) requiring loading before each shot; not having a cartridge magazine.  
**sin-gle-space** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl spāz/), *v.*, *-spaced*, *-spacing*. —*v.* 1. to type (copy) on each line space. —*v.* 2. to type copy leaving no blank spaces between lines.  
**sin-gle Spanish bur-ton**, a tackle having a runner as well as the fall supporting the load. See *diag.* at *tackle*.  
**sin-gle stand-ard**, 1. a single set of principles or rules applying to everyone; as a single moral code applying to both men and women. Cf. *double standard*. 2. monometallism.  
**sin-gle-stick** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl stɪk/), *n.* 1. a short, heavy stick. 2. (formerly) a wooden stick held in one hand, used instead of a sword in fencing. b. fencing with such a stick.  
**sin-glet** (sɪŋɡ/ɡlɪt/), *n.* *Chiefly Brit.* a man's undershirt or jersey.  
**sin-gle tape**. See under *magnetic tape*.  
**sin-gle tax**, *Econ.* a tax, as on land, that constitutes the sole source of public revenue. —*sin-gle-tax*, *adj.*  
**sin-gle-ton** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl tən), *n.* 1. something occurring singly. 2. *Cards*, a card that is the only one of a suit in a hand.  
**sin-gle-track** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl træk/), *adj.* having a narrow scope; one-track: a single-track mind.  
**sin-gle-tree** (sɪŋɡ/ɡəl trɪ/), *n.* whiffletree. [var. of *SWINGLETREE*]  
**sin-gle whip**. See under *whip* (def. 20). See *diag.* at *tackle*.  
**sin-gly** (sɪŋɡ/ɡli), *adv.* 1. apart from others; separately. 2. one at a time; as single units. 3. single-handed; alone. [ME *senglely*]  
**sing-song** (sɪŋɡ/sɒŋɡ/, -sɒŋɡ/), *n.* 1. verse, or a piece of verse, of a jingling or monotonous character. 2. monotonous rhythmical cadence, tone, or sound. 3. *Brit.* a group sing. —*adj.* 4. monotonous in rhythm.  
**sing-spiel** (sɪŋɡ/spɛɪl/; Ger. zɪŋɡ/ʃpɛɪl/), *n.* a German opera, esp. of the 18th century, using spoken dialogue. [*<* G. *U.* *sing-play*]  
**sin-gu-lar** (sɪŋɡ/ɡyʊlər/), *adj.* 1. extraordinary; remarkable; exceptional: a singular success. 2. unusual or strange;

odd; different: singular behavior. 3. being the only one of its kind; unique: a singular example. 4. separate; individual. 5. *Gram.* noting or pertaining to a member of the category of number indicating that a word form has one referent or denotes one person, place, thing, or instance, as boy, a singular noun, or goes, a singular form of the verb. Cf. *dual* (def. 4), *plural* (def. 4). 6. *Logic*, of or pertaining to something individual, specific, or not general. 7. *Obs.* personal; private. 8. *Obs.* single. —*n.* *Gram.* 9. the singular number. 10. a form in the singular. [ME < L *singularis*]. See *SINGULAR*, -*ness* —*sin-gu-lar-ly*, *adv.* —*Syn.* 1-4. peculiar. 5. bizarre, queer, curious. 3. uncommon, rare. —*Ant.* 1. usual.  
**sin-gu-lar-ize** (sɪŋɡ/ɡyʊləraɪz/), *v.*, *-ized*, *-is-ing*. *Chiefly Brit.* singularize. —*sin-gu-lar-iza-tion*, *n.*  
**sin-gu-lar-ity** (sɪŋɡ/ɡyʊlərɪti/), *n.*, *pl.* -*ities* for 2. 1. the state, fact, or quality of being singular. 2. a singular, unusual, or unique quality. [ME *singularitas* < LL *singularitas*]  
**sin-gu-lar-ize** (sɪŋɡ/ɡyʊləraɪz/), *v.*, *-ized*, *-is-ing*. to make singular. Also, esp. *Brit.*, singularise. —*sin-gu-lar-iza-tion*, *n.*  
**sinh** (sɪŋ), *n.* *Math.* hyperbolic sine. [SIN(ε) + H(TPER-SOLIC)]  
**Sin-ha-lese** (sɪn'hælez/, -lez/), *adj.*, *n.*, *pl.* -*leses*. Sinhalese.  
**Sin-i-cism** (sɪn'i sɪz/əm), *n.* something characteristic of or peculiar to the Chinese. [*Sinic* Chinese (< ML *Sinicus*) < MGk *Sinikos* = LGk *Sin*(at) the Chinese + -ikos(-ic) + -ism]  
**Sin-ing** (sɪn/ɪŋɡ/), *n.* a city in and the capital of Chinghai in W China, 300,000 (est. 1957). Also, Hsinang.  
**sin-is-ter** (sɪn'i stər), *adj.* 1. threatening or portending evil, harm, or trouble; ominous. 2. malevolent; evilly intended. 3. *Heraldry*, noting the side of an escutcheon or achievement of arms that is to the left of the hypothetical bearer (opposed to *dexter*). 4. *Archaic*, of or on the left side; left. [late ME < L: on the left hand or side, hence unfavorable, injurious (from the Roman belief that unfavorable omens appear on one's left)] —*sin-is-ter-ly*, *adv.* —*Syn.* 1. inauspicious, portentous. —*Ant.* 1. benign.  
**sinistr-**, a learned borrowing from Latin meaning "left," "on the left," used in the formation of compound words: *sinistrous*. Also, esp. before a consonant, *sinistrous*. [*<* L *sinistr-*, s. of *sinister*]  
**sin-is-tral** (sɪn'i strəl), *adj.* 1. of, pertaining to, or on the left side; left (opposed to *dextral*). 2. left-handed. [late ME < ML *sinistralis*] —*sin-is-tral-ly*, *adv.*  
**sin-is-tro-gy-ra-tion** (sɪn'i strɔ'gi rə'shən, sɪn'i strɔ'trɔ-), *n.* *Chem.* levorotation. —*sin-is-tro-gy-ric* (sɪn'i strɔ'gi rɪk/), *adj.*  
**sin-is-trorse** (sɪn'i strɔrs/, sɪn'i strɔrs/, sɪn'i strɔrs/), *adj.* *Bot.* (from a point of view at the center of the spiral) rising spirally from right to left, as a stem (opposed to *dextrorse*). [*<* L *sinistorsus* (us), lit., turned leftwards, contr. of *sinistorsus*, var. of *sinistorsus*. See *SINISTRO-*, *VERSUS*]  
**sin-is-trous** (sɪn'i strɔs/), *adj.* 1. ill-omened; unlucky; disastrous. 2. *sinistral*; left. —*sin-is-trous-ly*, *adv.*  
**Sin-it-ic** (sɪn'ɪt/ɪk/), *n.* 1. a branch of Sino-Tibetan consisting of the various local languages and dialects whose speakers share literary Chinese as their standard language. —*adj.* 2. of or pertaining to the Chinese, their language, or their culture. [*<* LL *Sin*(ae) the Chinese (< LGk *Sind* + -itic)]  
**sink** (sɪŋk/), *v.*, *sank* or, often, *sunk*; *sank* or *sunk-en*; *sink-ing*; *n.* —*v.* 1. to fall, drop, or descend gradually to a lower level. 2. to go down toward or below the horizon. 3. to slope downward; dip. 4. to displace the volume of an underlying substance or object and become submerged or partially submerged (often fol. by *in* or *into*): The battleship sank within two hours. His foot sank in the mud. 5. to collapse slowly from weakness, fatigue, etc.; 6. to become absorbed in or gradually to enter a state or condition (usually fol. by *in* or *into*): to sink into slumber. 7. to pass or fall into some lower state or condition. 8. to fall in physical strength or health. 9. to become lower in loudness, tone, or pitch. 10. to enter or permeate the mind; become known or understood (usually fol. by *in* or *into*): I repeated it till the words sank in. 11. to become hollow, as the cheeks. 12. to sit, recline, or lie (usually fol. by *down*, *in*, *on*, etc.): He sank down on the bench. —*v.* 13. to cause to fall, drop, or descend gradually. 14. to cause to become submerged. 15. to lower or depress the level of. 16. to bury, plant, or lay (a pipe, conduit, etc.) into or as into the ground. 17. to bring to a worse or lower state or status. 18. to reduce in amount, extent, intensity, etc. 19. to lower in loudness, tone, or pitch. 20. to invest in the hope of making a profit or gaining some other return. 21. to dig, bore, or excavate (a hole, shaft, well, etc.). —*n.* 22. a basin or receptacle connected with a water supply, used for washing. 23. a low-lying, poorly drained area where waters collect or disappear by sinking down into the ground or by evaporation. 24. sinkhole (def. 2). 25. a place of vice or corruption. 26. a drain or sewer. 27. any pond or pit for sewage or waste, as a cesspool or a pool for industrial wastes. [ME; OE *sincan*]; c. D *sinken*, G *sinken*, IceI *sökna*, Goth *singan*]  
**sink-age** (sɪŋk/ɪdʒ/), *n.* the act, process, or an amount of sinking.  
**sink-er** (sɪŋk/ər/), *n.* 1. a person or thing that sinks. 2. a person employed in sinking, as one who sinks shafts. 3. a weight, as of lead, for sinking a fishing line or net below the surface of the water. 4. *Slang*, a doughnut.  
**sink-hole** (sɪŋk/hɒl/), *n.* 1. a hole formed in soluble rock by the action of water, serving to conduct surface water to an underground passage. 2. Also called *sink*, a depressed area in which waste or drainage collects. [ME]  
**Sin-kiang** (sɪn'kyɑŋ/; Chin. shín/kyāŋ/), *n.* the westernmost division of China, bordering Tibet, India, the Soviet Union, and Mongolia; formerly a province. 5,640,000 (est. 1957); 635,829 sq. mi. *Cap.*: Urumchi. Official name, *Sin-kiang-Ui-gur Auton/omous Re-gion* (sɪn'kyāŋ/wɛ'gər/-gōr/; Chin. shín/kyāŋ/wɛ'gōr/).  
**sink-ing fund**, a fund to extinguish an indebtedness, usually a bond issue.  
**sink-ing spell**, a temporary decline, as in health.  
**sin-less** (sɪn/lɪs/), *adj.* free from or without sin. [ME *sinles*, OE *synlās*]  
**sin-ner** (sɪn/ər/), *n.* a person who sins; transgressor. [ME]